Janna Moes

Middle School Observations

12-8-11

Teacher: Quinton Cermak

Subject: Social Studies

Grade: 8th grade

Date: 11-3-11

In Quinton Cermak’s social studies class, he has a class set of laptops in his room. For their technology lesson, students were learning about the differing opinions between federalists, for the constitution, and anti-federalists, against the constitution. To take advantage of these varying viewpoints, students were asked to blog about one argument from the perspective of a federalist or an anti-federalist. The blog program used was in a link through Blackboard. To guide the students’ discussion in their blog entry, Quinton had a rubric so they knew exactly what they should include. When they were finished with their entry, they then would go and comment on other students. I enjoyed getting to see how students took on the character of the federalists and anti-federalist. Blogs are used as a showcase for opinions and this was a great way for those opinions to be academic. Most of the students completely understood the assignment and were able to complete it. This activity was a very high level of thinking by taking the knowledge and applying it in another format. For some students, especially the lower students, this was a difficult task.

Teacher: Deb Hepper

Subject: Science

Grade: 6th Grade

Date: 11-16-11

Deb Hepper is a 6th grade science teacher at Georgia Morse Middle School. In her class, students were learning about atoms, protons, neutrons, and electrons. Instead of teaching them specifically about how to arrange parts of the atom for various elements, students were using an exploratory website. To first introduce the students to the website, Deb showed an overview of the website and had a worksheet to guide them through and record their answers. Afterwards, students went to the computer lab and work on the website individually. The great thing about this website was that when arranging the parts of the atom, if the student had anything wrong in the problem, they received immediate feedback from the website. Students would have to continually rearrange the protons, neutrons, and electrons until it was correct.

Teacher: Lisa Starr

Subject: Language Arts

Grade: 8th Grade

Date: 11-10-11

For Lisa Starrs class, she presented Tagul to her class as a Veteran’s Day activity. In Tagul, very similar to Wordle, students are able to insert text into a word collage. The difference with Tagul is that the words are linked to Google search and you are able to make the words into the shape of an image. For the image shape, you can use one of the preloaded images or you can upload you own image. When first working with Tagul, students were asked to come up with a list of words that described a veteran. The end collection of all of the students work was combined to make an American flag. The classes that were high students were asked to create the star shape. The classes that had lower students were asked to just keep there a rectangle shape for the strips. When I observed her classroom, she would show the students a step and then the students would follow. It was a little difficult for students to help each other because their desks were in rows. In the end, the Tagul project was displayed in the hallway as a large American flag.

Teacher: Kathy Norwick

Subject: Math

Grade: 6th Grade

Date: 11-22-11

It was great to observe Kathy Norwicks math class, since she was using the computers to collaborate on a group project. Students were using Google Docs to collaborate on a PowerPoint together. It was great to use Google Docs for this because then each student could take a different part of the assignment where as in a normal PowerPoint they all would have to be on the same slide of the PowerPoint. In the traditional way one student ends up doing a majority of the work. In this project the students were asked to come up with a business and supply their business with t-shirts, advertisement, and flyer cost. The Google projects were all linked to real websites where student had to price out the costs. Many times in math the activities and lessons center on individual work; this project gave them opportunity to learn from each other in a do collaborative work.

Overall, it was wonderful to see what my colleagues at my own school are doing with technology. We have a wonderful staff that works hard for our students by implementing new technology all of the time. Being required to observe other teachers was a treat because it gave me that excuse to go into other teachers’ rooms and see what they were using for technology. In our busy days at school, it is not always easy to make time for that. I hope to make more time for that in the future.